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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2009

Media Highlights: Secretary Clinton in Israel; Ahmadinejad to Visit Turkey; Davutoglu Visits Northern Iraq; Erdogan to Visit the US; Afghanistan Elections

Hillary Blow to Palestinians (Radikal)
Under an inside-pages headline, "Patience Has a Limit," mainstream Hurriyet reports Secretary Clinton made a "tough statement" on Iran's nuclear program in Israel. "We prefer solutions such as processing low enriched uranium outside Iran. But we will not wait forever -- patience has a limit," said Clinton. In "The US Retracts Settlement Condition," Islamist-oriented Zaman reports that at Saturday's joint press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu, Clinton said Israel is putting significant limits on settlement activity. Clinton has lauded Israel for making "unprecedented concessions" for re-launching peace talks with the Palestinians, says Zaman. In "Hillary Blow to Palestinians," liberal Radikal says Clinton, while pressing Abbas, claimed that Israel brought "unprecedented limitations" on new settlements.

Ahmadinejad to Visit Istanbul November 8-9
All papers report Iranian President Ahmadinejad will visit Istanbul on November 8-9 to attend the 25th session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to be held in Istanbul from November 5-9. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak says Ahmadinejad would visit Turkey right after Prime Minister Erdogan's visit to Tehran. In "Iranian Leader to Visit Turkey Again," mainstream Milliyet says Ahmadinejad would meet President Gul and ask for Turkish support on Tehran's nuclear program. Liberal Radikal says prior to his travel to Turkey, Ahmadinejad commented the West cannot be trusted in nuclear negotiations, and said that the power of Iran's adversaries amounts to that of a "mosquito."

Editorials on Iran

Omer Taspinar commented in mainstream Sabah under the headline "Honeymoon between Turkey and Iran Concerns the West": "If the diplomatic negotiations between the US and Iran fails, because of its intense political and economic relations with Iran, Turkey might fall into a difficult situation. Potentially, this situation is

more important than the Turkey-Israel crisis. Because, being concerned themselves about Israel and Netanyahu's stance, the West can understand the problems Turkey has with Israel. However, when it comes to Iran, the US and the EU will not have the same understanding. If Russia also decides to join the side of the West, Turkey might find itself lonely in the UN and in the Western platforms because the US and the EU have exhibited a joint stance against Iran since 2005. When the Iran issue comes to the UN level, all eyes will turn to temporary member Turkey. If Turkey doesn't support the West at this level, then the beliefs of the West about Turkey moving towards the Middle East will get stronger. Therefore, the AKP government should watch its steps carefully. Turkey's ties with Iran desperately need fine tuning. Hopefully, Ankara will assess its position prior to PM Erdogan's US visit on December 7."

Erdal Saglam assessed in mainstream Hurriyet under the headline "Getting Iran Gas is not as Easy as It is Said": "Turkey signed a gas agreement with Iran under more difficult conditions than the previous ones. We had held the same hopes in the past as well and all our hopes had failed at the end. To start with, huge amounts of money is needed for this kind of business. Moreover, many international companies are searching for gas in the 29 blocks of the Pars region. Even though the government says the US is not reacting to the gas agreement, as happened in the past, the US is not showing its reaction openly. Turkey might be able to transfer Iranian gas to Europe through Nabucco only after it gets full EU membership. Meanwhile, giving wrong information to the public and pretending that everything is running smoothly will bring more harm than the good."

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Davutoglu Pays 'Historic Visit' to Northern Iraq
Weekend papers report Foreign Minister Davutoglu, who visited northern Iraq over the weekend, opened Turkish consulates in Basra and Mosul. On Friday, Davutoglu met with Massoud Barzani, the president of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) in northern Iraq. The visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister has been perceived by some observers as recognition of the autonomous government of northern Iraq. Davutoglu, however, said Turkey recognizes Iraq and that Iraq, like the US, had a federal structure. "Do you think that a visit to Texas would mean recognition of Texas?," asked Davutoglu. Saturday's Aksam comments that with Davutoglu's visit, northern Iraq became a new neighbor, emphasizing that Turkey has abandoned its former policy of ignoring northern Iraq. Papers report Davutoglu described the visit as an "historic turning point," and note that this was Turkey's first official contact with northern Iraq following the "unofficial" contacts of intelligence officials, diplomats and military officials with the representatives of the KRG. Turkish papers expect the pressure exerted on the PKK to increase as a result of the new developments. Papers comment Davutoglu went to northern Iraq to demand the elimination of the PKK and the evacuation of the refugees in Makhmur Camp.

Editorial on Northern Iraq-PKK

Ferai Tinc supports FM Davutoglu's visit to Northern Iraq in Hurriyet under the headline "Getting PKK Out of the Way": "At last, the Turkish Foreign Minister shook hands with the Kurdistan Administration. This was a very positive development. This meeting was received very positively in Irbil also. The reason for continuously escalating the relationship between Turkey and Iraq is the presence of the PKK in the region. And this situation will not change as long as the relations are based on the PKK presence. Because the PKK is not an isolated group which lives at the top of the mountain but is a part of the regional public. Whether we like it or not, the PKK became a component of the politics in Northern Iraq. In order to have improved relations with our neighbors we should stop expecting a solution to the PKK issue from Iraqi Kurds. We should center energy cooperation in our relations instead of the PKK. Moreover, we should strengthen the infrastructure of the economic cooperation, support the ties between NGOs, and diversify the projects in the fields of culture and education. The ties between Turkey and Iraqi Kurds will be stronger only after these things are realized. In short, the PKK should be kept out of the way in our ties with the Iraqi Kurdistan Administration."

Turkey's Role in Its Region Will be Discussed in Erdogan's US Visit (Cumhuriyet)

The deputy chairman of the ruling Ak Party, Kursad Tuzmen, commented on Prime Minister Erdogan's forthcoming visit to the US in a front-page report in leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet under the headline "We'll Discuss Turkey's Ties with its Neighbors in the US."

"The issues of Turkey-Armenia, Turkey-Israel ties, and the US' Iraq exit policy will be raised during Erdogan's visit to the US," said Tuzmen. He added Turkey's position and role in the region would also be discussed. "This visit is indicative of a period in which we will do important work. I see it as an important invitation for leaving behind the ups and downs in ties between the two countries," emphasized Tuzmen. He also noted that the US was a "huge economy," but lamented the fact that Turkey cannot take enough share from it.

Afghan Rival Drops Out of Election

Media outlets today observe Afghan presidential challenger Abdullah Abdullah quit the election run-off after accusing the government of not meeting his demand for a fair vote. In "Abdullah Quits, But Afghan Run-Off Will Go Ahead," liberal Radikal notes "Abdullah said he made his decision after Karzai turned down his demands for changes in the Independent Election Commission and other measures that he said would prevent massive fraud." A leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet headline reads, "Election Turmoil in Afghanistan," and notes, "the decision of former Afghan FM Abdullah leaves doubts over

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the legitimacy of the next government." In "Abdullah Withdraws, Karzai is the Only Candidate," Islamist-oriented Zaman speculates that "a weakened Afghan government under President Karzai would be a blow for the US administration as it decides whether to send more US troops to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan."

Upcoming events:

Q November 2: President Gul pays an official visit to Slovakia.
Q November 2: The Council of Ministers will hold a meeting to be chaired by Prime Minister Erdogan.
Q November 2: Foreign Minister Davutoglu visits Malaysia for the Islamic countries' D-8 meeting.
Q November 8: CHP leader Deniz Baykal will go to Iraq to meet Iraqi President Talabani.

TV News (NTV)

Domestic

Q The Turkish Health Ministry announced swine flu killed six in Turkey, with three patients dying on Sunday because of the virus. A mass swine flu vaccination will start Monday.
Q One baby and three children are killed in flashfloods caused by torrential rains in Yalova and Mardin.
Q Former US President Bill Clinton and former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroder are in Istanbul for a conference on "Leadership for Sustainable Success."
Q Entrepreneurs in the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir have staged protests against banks that decline to give them loans.

World

Q Syrian Head of State Assad says the rapprochement between Turkey and Iran has been continuing for long time.
Q Israeli demonstrators protest against the arrival in the country of a Swedish journalist who accused Israel of stealing organs from dead Palestinians.
Q A Hamas lawmaker jailed in 2007 has been set free by Israel.
Q The former leaders of the Soviet Union, West Germany, and the US meet in Berlin to remember the fall of the Berlin Wall 20 years ago.

JEFFREY